

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 SSO-00 PRS-01 PA-01

OPR-02 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00

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O 251147Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1324

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 6596

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AEMR, SOPN, PLO, LE, US

SUBJECT: PUBLIC RELATIONS PAYOFF FOR EVACUATION ASSISTANCE

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PLO CONTINUES TO BE DISTURBED BY PRESS REPORTS INDICATING POSSIBILITY THAT PLO MAY BE HOLDING FOREIGNERS IN WEST BEIRUT AS VIRTUAL HOSTAGES. IN WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY MEANT TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS PAYOFF TO PLO FOR ITS COOPERATION, FATAH EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICIAL SUBHI "ABD AL-MU'TI, IN CONNECTION WITH PLO ASSISTANCE IN EVACUATION EFFORT, PASSED WORD TO US THAT HE WISHED ANSWERS TO FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FOR DISSEMINATION THIS EVENING THROUGH PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY (Wafa) TO LOCAL AND FOREIGN PRESS. FATAH IS HOPING FOR ANSWERS BY 1000 EDT. EMBASSY'S PROPOSED ANSWERS FOLLOW EACH QUESTION FOR DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS AND APPROVAL.

2. Q - DO YOU CONTACT THE PLO TO RENDER SUCH ASSISTANCE AS POSSIBLE IN PROTECTING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT?

A - WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH VARIOUS PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS, REGARDING MAINTAINING SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT ON THE SUBJECT OF THE AMBASSADOR'S MOVEMENTS, IT IS THE PLO WHICH HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROVIDED APPROPRIATE ESCORTS. (COMMENT TO DEPARTMENT: EVERYONE

KNOWS AND SEES THESE ESCORTS IN ACTION.)

3. Q - DO YOU CONTACT THE PLO DIRECTLY OR THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES? IS THIS ON YOUR INITIATIVE OF THE PLO'S? IS YOUR GOVERNMENT AWARE OF THESE CONTACTS, AND DO YOU HAVE ITS APPROVAL?

A - THE PARTIES WITH WHOM WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH, IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WITH REGARD TO MAINTAINING SECURITY INCLUDE THE PLO.

4. Q - WHAT IS YOUR POSITION REGARDING WHAT WAS PUBLISHED RECENTLY IN THE WASHINGTON POST CONCERNING THE PLO'S ROLE VIS-A-VIS AMERICAN CITIZENS IN LEBANON?

A - WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT WOULD CONFIRM THE SPECULATION THAT HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS.

5. Q - WHAT KINDS OF ASSISTANCE HAS THE PLO PROVIDED TO AMERICAN CITIZENS IN LEBANON?

A - THE PLO HAS COOPERATED FULLY IN ALL QUESTIONS OF SECURITY AND WELL-BEING AFFECTING INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN CITIZENS AND AMERICAN CITIZENS IN WEST BEIRUT.

6. REQUEST RESPONSE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
SEELYE

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04 MAY 2006

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